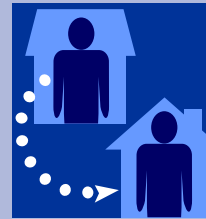


SIPP Survey Content

This section provides an overview of the SIPP survey instrument and its content.

- *SIPP Interview*
- *Core Content*
- *Topical Content*



SIPP Interview

With the 1996 Panel, interviewers began using laptop computers, rather than paper instruments, to collect SIPP survey data. Computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) has several advantages, but also one major disadvantage:

Advantages of CAI

- More of the core content from prior waves can be referenced in each interview.
- Responses and complicated logic from one part of the interview can be used in subsequent parts, allowing automatic checks for consistency and accuracy while the interviewer is in contact with the household.
- Certain decisions about which questions to ask, whom to ask, and so forth, are programmed rather than left to interviewer discretion.
- Survey elements appear seamless to both the interviewer and the respondent because automated skip patterns have replaced written instructions. *tip*

Disadvantage of CAI

- It is difficult for an analyst to understand the logical flows of the instrument. SIPP screen books are available to help users discern the meaning of an item, but they do not help with path logic.

Interviewers collect information on core items, which remain constant from one wave to the next, and on topical items, which do not appear in every wave.

SIPP *tip*

Users will probably find that certain data are more consistent across waves in the 1996 Panel than in earlier panels because of automatic data checks with CAI.



The Census Bureau interviewer first completes or updates a roster listing all household members, verifies basic demographic information, and checks certain facts about the household. The CAI instrument performs case-management functions for these data; previously, this information was recorded on control cards.

Respondents are asked to refer to records whenever possible, and interviewer probes ensure that reported earnings and income amounts are reasonable.

Core Content

Core questions, which collect critical labor force, income, and program participation data, are asked in every wave. The 1996 Panel and prior panels covered the same content, for the most part, although the questions were grouped differently:

1996 Panel

Earnings and employment
Program, general, and asset income
Additional questions

Pre-1996 Panels

Labor force and reciprocity
Earnings and employment
Amounts of income received
Program questions

Questions on employment and earnings address topics such as:

- Respondent's labor force status for each week of the reference period
- Characteristics of employers
- Self-employment

Section 1 - LABOR FORCE AND RECIPENCY

SHOW FLASHCARD J!

1. During the 4-month period outlined on this calendar, that is, from 6 months ago through (last month), did... have a job or business, either full time or part time, even for only a few days? Mark "Yes" for active duty in the Armed Forces, any temporary or part-time work, and work without pay in a family business or farm.

1000 ☐ Yes - Mark "Worked" (code 170) on ISS and SKIP to 4
1001 ☐ No

2a. Even though... did not have a job during this period, did... spend any time looking for work or on layoff from a job?

1002 ☐ Yes
1003 ☐ No - SKIP to 3a

b. Please look at the calendar. In which weeks was... looking for work or on layoff from a job? Please answer by giving the week number that appears to the right of each week on the calendar. Mark (X) all that apply.

1004 ☐ ALL
1005 ☐ 1
1006 ☐ 2
1007 ☐ 3
1008 ☐ 4
1009 ☐ 5
1010 ☐ 6
1011 ☐ 7
1012 ☐ 8
1013 ☐ 9
1014 ☐ 10
1015 ☐ 11
1016 ☐ 12
1017 ☐ 13
1018 ☐ 14
1019 ☐ 15
1020 ☐ 16
1021 ☐ 17
1022 ☐ 18

c. Could... have taken a job during any of those weeks if one had been offered?

1002 ☐ Yes - SKIP to 3a
1003 ☐ No

d. What was the main reason... could not take a job during those weeks? Mark (X) only one.

1004 ☐ Already had a job
1005 ☐ Temporary illness
1006 ☐ School
1007 ☐ Other - Specify g

3a. Even though... did not have a job during this period, did... do any work at all that earned some money?

1004 ☐ Yes - Mark "SS" on ISS
1005 ☐ No - SKIP to 3a, page 4

b. In which of the months shown on this calendar did... do that work? Mark (X) all that apply.

1000 ☐ Last month
1001 ☐ 2 months ago
1002 ☐ 3 months ago
1003 ☐ 4 months ago
1004 ☐ SKIP to 3a, page 4

4. Did... have a job or business, either full or part time, during EACH of the weeks in this period? Note that the person did not have to work each week.

1000 ☐ Yes
1001 ☐ No - SKIP to 6a

5a. Was... absent without pay from... 's job or business for any FULL weeks during the 4-month period?

1000 ☐ Yes
1001 ☐ No - SKIP to 6a, page 4

b. Please look at the calendar. In which weeks was... absent without pay? Please answer by giving the week number that appears to the right of each week on the calendar. Mark (X) all that apply.

1000 ☐ ALL
1001 ☐ 1
1002 ☐ 2
1003 ☐ 3
1004 ☐ 4
1005 ☐ 5
1006 ☐ 6
1007 ☐ 7
1008 ☐ 8
1009 ☐ 9
1010 ☐ 10
1011 ☐ 11
1012 ☐ 12
1013 ☐ 13
1014 ☐ 14
1015 ☐ 15
1016 ☐ 16
1017 ☐ 17
1018 ☐ 18

c. What was the main reason... was absent without pay from... 's job or business during those weeks? Mark (X) only one.

1000 ☐ On layoff
1001 ☐ Own illness
1002 ☐ On vacation
1003 ☐ Bad weather
1004 ☐ Labor dispute
1005 ☐ New job to begin within 30 days
1006 ☐ Other - Specify g

SKIP to 3a, page 4

NOTES

- A business owned by the respondent and whether the respondent is active in its management, owns it as an investment, or does some of both
- Earnings from either jobs or self-employment
- Unemployment compensation during the reference period
- Time spent looking for work
- Moonlighting
- Employment situation for up to two jobs and two businesses



Questions on program, general, and asset income address topics such as:

- Benefits or income from programs such as Social Security, Food Stamps, and General Assistance
- Retirement, disability, and survivor's income
- Unemployment insurance and workers' compensation
- Severance pay
- Lump-sum payments from pension or retirement plans
- Child support
- Alimony payments
- Assets—401(k) plans, stocks, rental property, and the like

Additional questions cover the following kinds of topics:

- Health insurance ownership and coverage
- Educational assistance
- Energy assistance
- School lunch program participation
- Subsidized housing



Topical Content

Topical questions are not repeated in each wave, and their frequency and timing vary.

Topical questions sometimes appear in separate topical modules that follow the core questions; at other times they are placed with core questions that relate to the same topic. The term topical module, therefore, refers to all topical items of the same theme, instead of those that are grouped into a distinct module.

Reference periods for items in topical modules vary widely, ranging from the respondent's status at the time of the interview to the respondent's experience over his or her entire life. Analysts should check question wording carefully to ascertain the reference period for a particular topical question.

Analysts also need to check the universe for each topical question because topical modules are not uniformly asked of all respondents. **tip**

The large number of topical modules that have appeared in SIPP panels can be grouped under the following broad themes:

- Health, disability, and physical well-being
- Financial
- Child care and financial support

SIPP tip

Over time, topical module content may have changed with no change in title, or the title may have changed with little change in content. Sometimes, content has “floated” from one topical module to another. Significant overlap in content may exist between two topical modules with different titles.

- Education and employment
- Family and household characteristics and living conditions
- Personal history
- Welfare reform

Information on specific topical modules and the panels and waves in which they have appeared is available in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 of the *SIPP Users' Guide*.